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To find out more and for helpful tools, like resume writing tips, a degree matcher and realistic job previews, visit the Student/Graduate section of our website at www.shell.us/careers.

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# Table of Contents

## THE UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVE
- Career Services .......................................................... 2
- Playing Fair: Ethics in the Employment Search .................. 3
- No Show and Cancellation Policy ................................. 4
- Partners: The Faculty and Employers ............................ 4
- Co-op/Intern & Career Services ................................. 5

## SEARCH TACTICS
- Informational Interviews ........................................... 5
- How to Find the Job You Want ...................................... 7
- Network Your Way to a Job ........................................... 8

## CORRESPONDENCE ADVICE
- The Top Ten Pitfalls in Résumé Writing ......................... 9
- Sample Résumés .......................................................... 10
- Letters Used in the Employment Process ...................... 13
- Sample Letters ............................................................ 14
- Email Correspondence .................................................. 15

## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS
- What Happens During the Interview? ............................. 16
- Ten Rules of Interviewing ............................................ 17
- Questions Asked by Employers .................................... 18
- Questions to Ask Employers ........................................ 18
- Turning The Tables in the Interview ............................... 19

## THE LAST WORD
- Evaluating an Offer of Employment ............................... 20
- The Art of Negotiating .................................................. 22
- The Benefits of Company Benefits ............................... 23
- Professional Etiquette ................................................... 24

## ADVERTISER INDEX
- Clark County School District ................................. 21
- Sanderson Farms .......................................................... 6
- Shell ........................................................................... Inside Front Cover
- Texas Tech University, Rawls College of Business ........ 2
- U.S. Department of State ............................................ Inside Back Cover
- White Sands Missile Range ......................................... Inside Back Cover
Career Services
Your Guide to a Successful Future

Mission & Purpose

The Career and Outreach Service Department, in support of the university’s mission, offers a variety of programs designed to provide professional and career readiness, placement, and development services. The department maintains the unique role of providing programs and services that assist students and graduates through a combination of recruitment, cooperative education, co-op and intern employment, academic enrichment and outreach services. In collaboration with each academic college, the department works to inform students about available career opportunities in corporate agriculture, business, education, government and non-profit agencies.

The Career and Outreach Service Department supports and manages the university’s Pre College Enrichment Institute for talented high school students, the Parents Association and other private and public entities that provide enrichment and developmental opportunities for students.

Services

Career & Outreach Services (more commonly referred to as the Career Center) is located in Evans Hall, Room 217. The following services are offered either on a walk-in basis or by appointment:

- **Career Resource Library**
  - Summer Job/Internship Listing
  - Job Vacancy Listing
  - Employer Directories
  - Employer Literature
  - Online Job Listing
  - Major and Career Information

- **Co-Op/Intern Educational Programs**
  - Career-Related Work Experience
  - Alternating Work and Study
  - Temporary Employment
  - Earned Academic Credits

- **Major and Career Exploration**
  - Career Counseling
  - Graduate/Professional School Information
  - Programs/Workshops/Seminars:
    - Choosing the Right Major
    - Marketing Your Skills
    - Researching Your Career
    - Informational Interviews
    - Job Seeking Skills
    - Career Placement Testing

- **Professional Employment**
  - Job Search Preparation
  - Computerized Registration System
  - Résumé Critiquing Services
  - Video Practice Interviews
  - Employer Recruitment
  - On-Campus Interviews
  - Candidate Résumé Referral
  - Job Search Resources

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Also ask about our MS, MSA and PhD programs
Playing Fair: Ethics in the Employment Search

Students Can Expect From the Career Center...

1. **Confidentiality**: Staff shall maintain the confidentiality of student information, including written records, reports, and computer databases.

2. **Freedom of Choice**: Students are entitled to unbiased, objective assistance from Career Center staff in developing a career plan and making career choices.

3. **Access to Services and Events**: The only requirement for students to receive/attend Career Center services is registration with the Career Center.

4. **Access to Career Information**: All students, regardless of personal or educational background, are provided equal and full access to career-related information, including information on employing organizations and career opportunities. The Career Center staff is committed to informing students of how to obtain information which may influence a student’s career choices.

5. **Testing Information**: The Career Center staff will inform students of the availability of testing, purpose of testing, and policies regarding disclosure of test results.

Students Can Expect From Employers...

1. **Confidentiality**: Employers are expected to maintain confidentiality of student information, regardless of the source, including personal knowledge, written records/reports, and computer databases. Employers should not disclose information about students to another organization without prior written consent of the student.

2. **Accurate Information**: Employers are expected to provide accurate information about their organization and employment opportunities. This includes, but is not limited to, positions available, responsibilities, and benefits of employment.

3. **Freedom From Undue Pressure**: Employers are expected to provide students with reasonable time to make a decision about accepting an employment offer. They are also expected to provide students with a reasonable process for making decisions. For example, an unreasonable process is one in which a student is told a job offer is good for a certain time period, while not telling the student that the same offer has been made to another student, and the one who accepts first gets the job.

4. **Timely Communication**: Employers are expected to inform students of their status in the hiring process, and should communicate hiring decisions within the agreed-upon time frame.

5. **Testing Information**: Employers should inform students in advance of any testing, the purpose of the tests, and policies regarding disclosure of test results.

Students Should...

1. **Register**: In order to participate in the Career Center activities/programs, students must register with NACELink.

2. **Attend**: Students shall attend a minimum of three workshops/seminars presented by the Career Center during each semester. For each program attended, a certificate of achievement will be placed in a student’s Career Center file, which employers may view. Students will be responsible for providing a copy of their certificate to the Career Center for placement in their file.

3. **Interview**: Students may sign up for interviews in the Career Center and interview with employers they are interested in working for and whose eligibility requirements they meet. Students should not participate in “practice interviews” with companies in which they are not interested—it is misleading to employers and may cost an interested student an interview slot.

4. **Employment Decision**: Do not keep employers hanging. Communicate acceptance or refusal of a job offer as promptly as possible.

5. **Accept a Job Offer in Good Faith**: When accepting an offer, a student should have every intention of honoring that commitment. Accepting an offer while hoping for another offer is misleading to the employer and may restrict opportunities for others who are genuinely interested in the employer.

6. **Withdraw From Recruiting When Job Search Is Complete**: Once a student accepts an offer or decides to pursue graduate school or professional studies, he or she should notify the Career Center and withdraw from interviewing immediately. Students should also inform potential employers of their decision. This may leave the door open for future employment opportunities.

7. **Reimbursement**: When appropriate, students can claim reimbursement from companies for expenses they have incurred in the recruitment process. Requests should be only for reasonable and legitimate expenses.

8. **Career Success**: Success depends primarily upon the information a student obtains. Students should make informed choices about their futures and take responsibility for acquiring information about career opportunities, organizations, and any other information that may influence a career choice.
No Show and Cancellation Policy

All interviews are scheduled appointments. If a student cannot keep the interview due to unforeseeable circumstances, he or she should notify Career Services at the earliest possible moment. A student is required to notify the Career Center within 24 hours when canceling an interview. Failure to give 24-hour notice of cancellation may forfeit a student’s interviewing privileges. **Students are strongly encouraged to keep all scheduled appointments. No shows and late cancellations are prohibited!!**

What Happens When a No Show or Late Cancellation Occurs?

- When a recruiter indicates “no show” behind a student’s name, the student is immediately notified. If notification is unsuccessful, the student is blocked from all remaining scheduled interviews.
- If a student calls after 4:30 p.m. the day before or on the day of the scheduled interview, the student will be considered a no show. The student then must follow the no show and late cancellation procedure.

No Show and Late Cancellation Procedure:

After the first no show or late cancellation, a student is required to write a letter of apology to the interviewer. The original letter and a stamped, addressed envelope must be hand-delivered to Career Services for approval by the Placement Coordinator or another professional staff member. This action must take place within three (3) working days. Upon approval, the student may keep all remaining scheduled appointments.

Students are only allowed two (2) no shows or late cancellations. If a second offense occurs, the student is blocked from all interviews during the semester. Students will be sent a notice of the block by the Placement Coordinator or Assistant Director. A block can be only be removed by the Placement Coordinator, Assistant Director or Director. After the second offense, students are blocked from all remaining interviews and are required to make an appointment with the Placement Coordinator or Assistant Director.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Placement Coordinator or the Assistant Director, the student may make an appointment for an appeal with the Director. The Director’s decision will be final. A copy of the decision will be placed in the student’s file.

Partners: The Faculty and Employers

A successful job-searching campaign is a team effort. The Career Center Advisory Committee and the Prairie View A&M University Cluster are excellent “partners” in the career development and employment process.

Career Center Advisory Committee

The Career Center Advisory Committee is Career Services’ link to each of the University’s academic units. Valuable insights into the career needs, concerns, opportunities, and/or obstacles experienced by students are shared by committee members. In addition, information relevant to trends in the industry, prospective employing organizations, and collaborative recruitment activities are also discussed. As a result of this forum, adjustments are made throughout the year within the department to better serve the needs of the students and employers.

Membership consists of department heads and/or their respective representatives from each academic unit throughout the university. Because of this partnership, the Career Center and respective departments are engaged annually in joint projects that produce excellent career opportunities for many students. The most valuable insight gained from this partnership is the information shared between partners where the forces of the “real” world are introduced to the academic world (theory meeting reality).

The Prairie View A&M University Cluster

Prairie View A&M University Cluster was formed to build a bridge and shorten the gap between industry and the university, and to improve the university’s capability to produce graduates who are ready to assume professional positions in the public or private sector. The Cluster’s mission is to involve education in the resolution of problems shared by industry and the university.

The PVAMU Cluster is composed of the university and interested businesses and corporations. Through joint action, members of the Cluster identify major areas for institutional development, establish priorities for action, and help to augment educational opportunities available to students. The Cluster operates by utilizing committees that are comprised of students, faculty, and industry representatives. The benefits gained from the Cluster are:

- highly skilled pool of applicants from which to recruit professional and management talent, and
- the return investment of graduates participating in future recruiting and other university events.
Co-op/Intern Program

This office serves all students representing all majors at PVAMU. In order to learn more about co-op/intern opportunities, students must:

• Have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or above.
• Have completed 30 hours of college credit prior to beginning their co-op or internship. (Note: Students may interview for positions during the semester in which they will complete the required number of hours).
• Establish a file with the co-op/intern coordinator’s office.
• Update file each semester (i.e., unofficial transcript or summary sheet, résumé, phone number, etc.).

Advantages of registering with the co-op/intern office are as follows:

• Exclusive access to numerous job opportunities.
• Individual résumé writing assistance.
• Materials faxed or mailed to employers at no charge to the students.
• Access to individuals who might assist students experiencing problems at their job site.

Career Services

This program is overseen by members of the professional staff. Services include:

• Seminars are offered throughout the school year regarding career and job search issues. Subjects include résumé writing, behavioral interviewing skills, preparing for career fairs, on-the-job survival skills, career decision-making/choosing a major, assertiveness training, maintaining an excellent credit rating, and using the Internet to conduct a job search. Additional topics will be added according to student requests.
• One-on-one assistance is provided for students who are not comfortable discussing career and/or job search issues in a group, or who want more in-depth assistance.
• Students with a grade point average less than 2.5 are encouraged to attend informational seminars and workshops such as study skills, career decision-making, etc.
• Career testing available on a limited basis. Students who are thinking about changing majors or students who are undecided on a major will be given priority. Interpretations of tests will be confidential.

Informational Interviews

One of the easiest and most effective ways to meet people in a professional field in which you are interested is to conduct informational interviews. Informational interviewing is a networking approach which allows you to meet key professionals, gather career information, investigate career options, get advice on job search techniques and get referrals to other professionals.

The art of informational interviewing is in knowing how to balance your hidden agenda (to locate a job) with the unique opportunity to learn firsthand about the demands of your field. Thus, never abuse your privilege by asking for a job, but execute your informational interviews skillfully, and a job may follow.

What motivates professionals to grant informational interviews?

The reasons are varied. Generally, most people enjoy sharing information about themselves and their jobs and, particularly, love giving advice. Some may simply believe in encouraging newcomers to their profession and others may be scoping out prospects for anticipated vacancies. It is common for professionals to exchange favors and information, so don’t hesitate to call upon people.

How do you set up informational interviews?

One possible approach is to send a letter requesting a brief informational interview (clearly indicating the purpose of the meeting, and communicating the fact that there is no job expectation). Follow this up with a phone call to schedule an appointment. Or, initiate a contact by making cold calls and set up an appointment. The best way to obtain an informational interview is by being referred from one professional to another, a process which becomes easier as your network expands.

How do you prepare for informational interviews?

Prepare for your informational interviews just as you would for an actual job interview: polish your presentation and listening skills, and conduct preliminary research on the organization. You should outline an agenda that includes well-thought-out questions.

Begin your interview with questions that demonstrate your genuine interest in the other person such as, “Describe a typical day in your department.” Then proceed with more general questions such as, “What are the employment prospects in this field?” or “Are you active in any professional organizations in our field and which would you recommend?” If appropriate, venture into a series of questions which place the employer in the advice-giving role, such as, “What should the most important consideration be in my first job?” The whole idea is for you to shine, to make an impression and to get referrals to other professionals.

Always remember to send a thank-you letter to every person who grants you time and to every individual who refers you to someone.
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How to Find the Job You Want

Finding the job you want takes many steps and involves just as many decisions. This checklist is designed to help you along the way and guide you to the appropriate sources. Be sure to discuss your progress with your career advisor.

Knowing What You Want

✓ Choose your ideal work environment—large corporation, small business, government agency or non-profit organization.
✓ Choose your ideal location—urban, suburban or rural.
✓ List your three most useful job skills and know which is your strongest.
✓ Know whether you want to work with people, data or things.
✓ Know if you want to work with others or work alone.
✓ Know whether you enjoy new projects or prefer following a regular routine.
✓ List some of the main career areas which might interest you.
✓ List your favorite leisure time activities.
✓ Know what kind of reward is most important to you in a job—money, security, creative authority, etc.

Researching Career Options

✓ Develop a list of career possibilities to research.
✓ Visit your career services library and utilize the Internet to learn about various careers. The Dictionary of Occupational Titles and the Occupational Outlook Handbook are valuable resources.
✓ Consider whether your desired career requires an advanced degree.
✓ Keep up with current trends in your field through trade publications and news/business magazines and newspapers.
✓ Identify employers interested in interviewing someone with your academic background and experience; create a list of three or more employers in the field you are considering.
✓ Make at least three professional contacts through friends, relatives or professors to learn more about your field of interest.
✓ Meet with faculty and alumni who work or who have worked in your field to talk about available jobs and the outlook for your field.

Getting Experience

✓ Narrow down the career options you are considering through course work and personal research.
✓ Participate in a work experience or internship program in your chosen field to learn of the daily requirements of the careers you are considering. Such assignments sometimes lead to permanent job offers following graduation.
✓ Become an active member in one or more professional associations—consult the Encyclopedia of Associations for organizations in your field.
✓ Volunteer for a community or charitable organization to gain further work experience. Volunteer positions can and should be included on your résumé.

Creating a Résumé

✓ Form a clear job objective.
✓ Know how your skills and experience support your objective.
✓ Use action verbs to highlight your accomplishments.
✓ Limit your résumé to one page and make sure it is free of misspelled words and grammatical errors.
✓ Create your résumé on a word processing program and have it professionally duplicated on neutral-colored paper, preferably white, light gray or beige.
✓ Compose a separate cover letter to accompany each résumé and address the letter to a specific person. Avoid sending a letter which begins “Dear Sir/Madam.”

Preparing for the Interview

✓ Arrange informational interviews with employees from companies with which you might want to interview. Use your network of acquaintances to schedule these meetings.
✓ Thoroughly research each employer with whom you have an interview—be familiar with product lines, services offered, growth prospects.
✓ Practice your interviewing technique with friends to help prepare for the actual interview.
✓ Using the information you have gathered, formulate questions to ask the employer during the interview.
✓ Arrive on time in professional business attire.
✓ Collect the needed information to write a thank-you letter after each interview.
Network Your Way to a Job

Many people use the classified ads as their sole job search technique. Unfortunately, statistics show that only 10% to 20% of jobs are ever published—which means that 80% to 90% of jobs remain hidden in the job market. For this reason, networking remains the number one job search strategy.

Networking Defined

A network is an interconnected group of supporters who serve as resources for your job search and ultimately for your career. Some great network contacts might include people you meet at business and social meetings who provide you with career information and advice. Students often hesitate to network because they feel awkward asking for help, but it should be an integral part of any job search. Though you might feel nervous when approaching a potential contact, networking is a skill that develops with practice, so don’t give up. Most people love to talk about themselves and their jobs and are willing to give realistic—and free—advice.

Eight Keys to Networking

1. Be Prepared  First, define what information you need and what you are trying to accomplish by networking. Remember, your purpose in networking is to get to know people who can provide information regarding careers and leads. Some of the many benefits of networking include increased visibility within your field, propelling your professional development, finding suitable mentors, increasing your chances of promotion and perhaps finding your next job.

   Second, know yourself—your education, experience and skills. Practice a concise, one-minute presentation of yourself so that people will know the kinds of areas in which you are interested. Your networking meeting should include the following elements: introduction, self-overview, Q&A, obtaining referrals and closing.

2. Be Targeted  Identify your network. For some, “I don’t have a network. I don’t know anyone,” may be your first reaction. You can start by listing everyone you know who are potential prospects: family members, friends, faculty, neighbors, classmates, alumni, bosses, co-workers and community associates. Attend meetings of organizations in your field of interest and get involved. You never know where you are going to meet someone who could lead you to your next job.

3. Be Professional  Ask your networking prospects for advice—not for a job. Your networking meetings should be a source of career information, advice and contacts. Start off the encounter with a firm handshake, eye contact and a warm smile. Focus on asking for one thing at a time. Your contacts expect you to represent yourself with your best foot forward.

4. Be Patient  Heena Noorani, research analyst with New York-based Thomson Financial, recommends avoiding the feeling of discouragement if networking does not provide immediate results or instant answers. She advises, “Be prepared for a slow down after you get started. Stay politely persistent with your leads and build momentum. Networking is like gardening: You do not plant the seed, then quickly harvest. Networking requires cultivation that takes time and effort for the process to pay off.”

5. Be Focused on Quality—Not Quantity  In a large group setting, circulate and meet people, but don’t try to talk to everyone. It’s better to have a few meaningful conversations than 50 hasty introductions. Don’t cling to people you already know; you’re unlikely to build new contacts that way. If you are at a reception, be sure to wear a nametag and collect or exchange business cards so you can later contact the people you meet.

6. Be Referral-Centered  The person you are networking with may not have a job opening, but he or she may know someone who is hiring. The key is to exchange information and then expand your network by obtaining additional referrals each time you meet someone new. Be sure to mention the person who referred you.

7. Be Proactive  Stay organized and track your networking meetings. Keep a list of your contacts and update it frequently with the names of any leads given to you. Send a thank-you note or email if appropriate. Ask if you can follow-up the conversation with a phone call, or even better, with a more in-depth meeting in the near future.

8. Be Dedicated to Networking  Most importantly, networking should be ongoing. You will want to stay in touch with contacts over the long haul—not just when you need something. Make networking part of your long-term career plan.

Questions to Ask During Networking Meetings

- What do you like most (least) about your work?
- Can you describe a typical workday or week?
- What type of education and experience do you need to remain successful in this field?
- What are the future career opportunities in this field?
- What are the challenges in balancing work and personal life?
- Why do people enter/leave this field or company?
- Which companies have the best track record for promoting minorities?
- What advice would you give to someone trying to break into this field?
- With whom would you recommend I speak? When I call, may I use your name?

Do’s & Don’ts of Networking

- Do keep one hand free from a briefcase or purse so you can shake hands when necessary.
- Do bring copies of your résumé.
- Don’t tell them your life story; you are dealing with busy people, so get right to the point.
- Don’t be shy or afraid to ask for what you need.
- Don’t pass up opportunities to network.

Written by Thomas J. Denham, managing partner and career counselor for Careers In Transition LLC.
The Top Ten Pitfalls in Résumé Writing

1. **Too long.** Most new graduates should restrict their résumés to one page. If you have trouble condensing, get help from a technical or business writer or a career center professional.

2. **Typographical, grammatical or spelling errors.** These errors suggest carelessness, poor education and/or lack of intelligence. Have at least two people proofread your résumé. Don’t rely on your computer’s spell-checkers or grammar-checkers.

3. **Hard to read.** A poorly typed or copied résumé looks unprofessional. Use a plain typeface, no smaller than a 12-point font. Asterisks, bullets, underlining, bold-face type and italics should be used only to make the document easier to read, not fancier. Again, ask a professional’s opinion.

4. **Too verbose.** Do not use complete sentences or paragraphs. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible. *A, an* and *the* can almost always be left out. Be careful in your use of jargon and avoid slang.

5. **Too sparse.** Give more than the bare essentials, especially when describing related work experience, skills, accomplishments, activities and club memberships that will give employers important information. Including membership in the Society of Women Engineers, for example, would be helpful to employers who wish to hire more women, yet cannot ask for that information.

6. **Irrelevant information.** Customize each résumé to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include all education and work experience, but emphasize only relevant experience, skills, accomplishments, activities and hobbies. Do not include marital status, age, sex, children, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.

7. **Obviously generic.** Too many résumés scream, “I need a job—any job!” The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her particular company.

8. **Too snazzy.** Of course, use good quality bond paper, but avoid exotic types, colored paper, photographs, binders and graphics. Electronic résumés should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10 and 14 points. Avoid underlining, italics or graphics.

9. **Boring.** Make your résumé as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.

10. **Too modest.** The résumé showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification or arrogance.

The Three Rs

The three Rs of résumé writing are **Research, Research, Research.** You must know what the prospective company does, what the position involves and whether you will be a fit, before submitting your résumé. And that means doing research—about the company, about the position and about the type of employee the company typically hires.

**Research the company.** Read whatever literature the company has placed in the career library. For additional information, call the company. Ask for any literature it may have, find out how the company is structured and ask what qualities the company generally looks for in its employees. Ask if there are openings in your area, and find out the name of the department head and give him or her a call. Explain that you are considering applying to their company, and ask for their recommendation for next steps. Thank that person for the information, and ask to whom your résumé should be directed.

The Internet is another key tool to utilize in your research. Most companies have Web sites that include information regarding company background, community involvement, special events, executive bios or even past annual reports. Be sure to take advantage of the Internet during your job search.

**Research the position.** The more you know about the position, the better able you will be to sell yourself and to target your résumé to that position. If possible, interview someone who does that same job. In addition to finding out the duties, ask if there is on-the-job training, whether they value education over experience (or vice versa) and what kind of turnover the department experiences. Ask what they like about the position and the company; more important, ask what they don’t like about it.

Finally, **research yourself.** Your goal is not just to get a job. Your goal is to get a job that you will enjoy. After you find out all you can about the company and the position, ask yourself honestly whether this is what you really want to do and where you really want to be. The odds are overwhelming that you will not hold this position for more than two or three years, so it’s not a lifetime commitment; however, this first job will be the base of your lifetime career. You must start successfully so that future recommendations will always be positive. Furthermore, three years is a long time to spend doing something you don’t like, working in a position that isn’t challenging or living somewhere you don’t want to live.

One last word of advice: Before you go to the interview, review the version of your résumé that you submitted to this employer. The résumé can only get you the interview; the interview gets you the job.
Basic Format and Content Description

**NAME**
Campus Address
City, State ZIP
Home Phone
E-mail Address (if checked daily)

**OBJECTIVE** (examples)
*General* A full-time position for the summer.

*Specific* A part-time position as a bank teller at Wells Fargo Bank.

**EDUCATION**
List class standing (e.g., junior standing), major and expected graduation date. If you are on the Dean's List or have other honors, include information here.

G.P.A. can be listed at or above 3.0 overall, or determine G.P.A. in major or upper division course work.

You can include a brief list of your course work if you feel it would help your application (i.e., if it shows breadth, or if there is required course work for the position).

Special skills such as foreign languages, computer knowledge, etc., can be listed here. You can list the high school you graduated from or other colleges you may have attended. Education abroad programs are considered a plus.

**EXPERIENCE**
Your job title.
Organization.
Brief description of duties. Dates.
You can use high school work experience or leadership activities if you are a freshman or sophomore, or if experiences/activities relate to the internship or job for which you are applying.

**ORGANIZATIONS** Optional

**COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES** Optional

**AWARDS** Optional

**INTERESTS** Optional

**REFERENCES** (List your references on a separate sheet.)

Sample Chronological Résumé

**DEREK DAVIS**
Campus Permanent
P.O. Box 1000 123 Green Street
Prairie View, TX 77446 Houston, TX 12345
(409) 555-5555 (713) 555-1111

**OBJECTIVE:**
Sales program trainee.

**EDUCATION:**
Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Managerial Economics, with special emphasis in Consumer and Managerial Economics
Prairie View A&M University, May 20xx
Associate of Arts in Business Administration
City College of Houston, Houston, TX, June 20xx

**EXPERIENCE:**
*Marketing/Sales Intern*, Progressive Microproducts, Houston, TX
Market personal computer hardware and software. Develop and implement marketing and advertising strategies. Design and develop educational and entertainment software for Apple computer systems. Participate in numerous microcomputer trade shows. (month/20xx–Present)

*Management Trainee/Salesperson*, Grand Auto, Prairie View, TX
Performed sales work for auto parts store with annual sales exceeding $35 million. Position required use of interpersonal skills to work effectively with customers and employees. Maintained a large store inventory utilizing a computerized inventory system. Supervised and trained sales personnel. Implemented parts department reorganization for enhanced work flow. Developed effective in-store and window displays. (month/20xx–month/20xx)

*Salesperson*, Consumer Distribution, Houston, TX
Performed general merchandise sales for large catalog chain store. Handled cash, performed inventory control, and completed clerical tasks. (month/20xx–month/20xx)

**LEADERSHIP:**
Secretary, Prairie View Agricultural Economics Association
Fundraising Chairperson, Cultural Pride Festival
Team Leader, Habitat for Humanity

**REFERENCES:**
Available upon request

A chronological résumé presents your education and work experience in a straightforward, reverse chronological order. If the majority of your work experience is related to your stated job objective, the chronological style can be effective. Please note that this chronological résumé is reformatted as a functional résumé in the next example.
Sample Functional Résumé

DEREK DAVIS
123 Green Street
Houston, TX 12345
(713) 555-1111

OBJECTIVE  Sales program trainee.
EDUCATION  Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Managerial Economics, with special emphasis in Consumer and Managerial Economics
            Prairie View A&M University, May 20xx

AREAS OF EFFECTIVENESS

MARKETING/SALES
- Marketed personal computer hardware and software
- Developed and implemented marketing and advertising strategies
- Performed sales work for auto parts chain store with annual sales exceeding $35 million
- Recognized for impressive sales record and received quarterly awards for outstanding performance
- Performed general merchandise sales for large catalog sales store
- Participated in numerous microcomputer trade shows

ORGANIZATION/PLANNING
- Designed and developed educational and entertainment software for Apple computer systems
- Implemented parts department reorganization for enhanced work flow
- Developed effective in-store and window displays

COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- Communicated effectively with customers and employees
- Revised policy manuals and developed curricula for training sessions
- Supervised and trained sales personnel

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
Marketing/Sales Intern, Progressive Microproducts, Houston, TX, month/20xx–Present
Management Trainee/Salesperson, Grand Auto, Prairie View, TX, month/20xx –month/20xx
Salesperson, Consumer Distribution, Houston, TX, month/20xx –month/20xx

ACTIVITIES
Secretary, Prairie View Agricultural Economics Association
Fundraising Chairperson, Cultural Pride Festival
Team Leader, Habitat for Humanity

REFERENCES  Available upon request

A functional résumé differs from a chronological résumé by concentrating on skills that you have used that relate to your stated objective rather than on the jobs you have had. A functional résumé is particularly effective if your work experience has not been closely related to your job objective, if you are changing careers, or if you are seeking a promotion. In this format you elaborate on the skills necessary to perform the desired job and how you have demonstrated those same skills in a different type of job.

Sample Teaching Résumé

ANGELA JACKSON
801 J Street, Apt. 22
Prairie View, TX 77446
Home: (409) 75x-xxxx
Message: (409) 75x-xxxx
E-mail: ajack123@aol.com

OBJECTIVE
A teaching position in a self-contained second through sixth grade classroom.

EDUCATION
Professional Teaching Credential, Prairie View A&M University, May 20xx.
Bachelor of Arts, English, Prairie View A&M University, May 20xx.

EXPERIENCE

Student Teacher, Yourtown Elementary School, Yourtown Joint Unified School District, Yourtown, TX. Self-contained culturally diverse fourth-grade classroom. Led weekly informal singing group. 9/xx-12/xx.

Volunteer Teacher’s Aide, Birch Lane School, Theirtown Unified School District, Theirtown, TX. Third Grade. Taught small groups in the areas of math and reading. Tutored individual students. 8/xx-6/xx.

SPECIAL SKILLS
• Demonstrated fluency in Spanish (reading, writing and speaking).
• Developed enrichment techniques in science with emphasis on experiential learning.
• Recognized as accomplished pianist and violinist.
• Interested in coaching basketball, track and cross-country.
• Utilized Apple and IBM computers for classroom instruction.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES
Volunteer Member, National Education Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. Leader, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts & 4-H.

INTERESTS/HOBBIES
Prevention of drug and alcohol abuse, creative writing, nutrition, reading, running, bike riding and travel.

TRAVEL
Lived in Mexico for three months. Travelled throughout Europe and Canada.

REFERENCES
Available upon request.

A teaching résumé compares closely to a combination chronological/functional résumé. However, teaching résumés are generally longer, with more elaboration on teaching experiences, including the grade level, type of classroom, subjects taught, and materials and methods used. A teaching résumé should include a section for hobbies and/or extracurricular activities.
MARY SMITH

Prairie View A&M University

P.O. Box 222
Prairie View, TX 77446
(409) 555-6111

111 Western Avenue
Chicago, IL 60006
(773) 555-1122

OBJECTIVE: A position in software design, development and testing.

EDUCATION:
Bachelor of Science, Computer Science
Prairie View A&M University, May 20xx. 3.25/4.0 G.P.A.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:
Computer Programmer
(June 20xx - September 20xx)
NASA/Ames Flight Support Branch, Mountain View, California
Programmed in VAX/VMS system and Machine and Assembly Language.
Developed understanding of Ingres database and Equel preprocessor.
Revised existing program to maintain flight schedules by integrating with Ingres database.
Introduced new program to find a peak frequency of input using the Marinco array processing board and Vectrix graphics monitor.

COMPUTER SKILLS:
Advanced PASCAL, Modula-II, C, Icon, LISP, and FORTRAN.
Machine and Assembly Language for the PDP-11 and M68000.
Ingres database, dBASE III, and Equel preprocessor.
UNIX and VAX/VMS systems.

RELATED COURSE WORK:
Automata Theory and Formal Languages
Algorithm Design and Analysis
Data Structures and Programming Techniques
Computer Structure and Assembly Language
Introduction to Artificial Intelligence
Programming Languages
Database Systems
Computer Graphics
Introduction to Computer Architecture
Simulation and Modeling

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT:
Tutor and Grader, Prairie View A&M University, September 20xx - Present
Mathematics Intern, Anytown High School, Anytown, TX, April 20xx - June 20xx
House Painter, Chicago, Illinois, June 20xx - September 20xx

MEMBERSHIPS:
Computer Science Club, Intramural Basketball, National Society of Black Engineers, Society of Women Engineers

REFERENCES:
Furnished upon request.

It is not appropriate to include your references in your résumé. However, you should prepare a list of references at the same time you prepare your résumé. References are people you have worked for, interned with, or volunteered for such as professors and/or campus administrators; they can also include counselors, coaches, mentors, or anyone in a professional position who can speak about your character and work ethic (academic references can be used). Usually, at least two references are given. List their names, business titles, business addresses and phone numbers. Always carry a copy of your résumé and references to an interview. Be sure to include your name and heading with address and phone number at the top of the page.
Letters Used in the Employment Process

When mailing a résumé, always include a cover letter. It provides an opportunity to sell oneself, and encourages the prospective employer to read the résumé. Employers do not like “form” cover letters, so always target the specific job for which you are applying. Ideally, the cover letter should be written on the same color and quality stationery as the résumé.

Elements of a Cover Letter

- **Greeting:** Address by name and title, someone in authority who could hire you. Do not write “Dear Sir or Madam,” or “To Whom it May Concern,” unless all efforts to locate a name have been exhausted.

- **Introduction:** In the initial paragraph, state the reason for the letter, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and indicate from which resource (i.e., Career Center, newspaper ad, friend, and so on) you learned about this opening. If referred by a professional in a related business, indicate that person’s name if you have been given permission to do so.

- **Body:** This should state why you are interested in the position and is an excellent opportunity to sell your skills and abilities. If possible, avoid repeating what you have already stated in your attached résumé. You should summarize and elaborate on any relevant experiences or achievements. Try to catch the employer’s attention by conveying your interest and enthusiasm for this line of work.

- **Closing:** In this paragraph, state your desire for a personal interview, and close your letter with an assertive statement or question which will encourage a positive response.

Sample Cover Letter

January 5, 20xx

P.O. Box 555
Prairie View, TX 77446
(555) 555-5555

Mr. James Employer
Engineering Division
ANY Corporation
Somewhere, TX 00000

Dear Mr. Employer:

Please accept this letter as an application for the cooperative education position which I learned about through Prairie View A&M University’s Co-op/Intern office. The position described sounds like a good match for my skills and abilities.

You will note on the enclosed résumé that I am a junior electrical engineering major with a cumulative grade point average of 3.2. I am a member of the National Society of Black Engineers, as well as Gamma Delta Iota (a social service organization). I am a flexible, dependable team player and am highly motivated to succeed in my chosen field.

Your consideration of my credentials would be greatly appreciated, and I am looking forward to meeting with you to discuss ways in which I could contribute to ANY Corporation. I am available to meet with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Wonderful Student

Enclosure: 1
Sample Letters

Letter of Application

Donna J. Nelson
128 S. College
Prairie View, TX 77446
May 1, 20xx

Mr. John W. Jones
Senior Partner
Jones, Smith and Ruggles
111 West Monroe Street
Houston, TX 77035

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am interested in pursuing opportunities in general management consulting. My specific interest is in the areas of long-range planning and the analysis of company policies, objectives, and organizational structure and design. I have enclosed my resume for your information.

My previous assignments while in the military included planning responsibilities as well as restructuring organizations to meet various changing requirements. In addition, I have given numerous oral presentations, many of which were designed as decision briefings. I am currently pursuing an M.B.A. in Management, which I expect to complete in December.

If you consider my experience and academic qualifications appropriate, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss possible future employment with you upon graduation in December.

Very truly yours,

Donna J. Nelson

Enclosures

Cover Letter

P.O. Box 2734
Prairie View, TX 77446
April 3, 20xx

Mr. Donald Wymans
Employment Manager
ABC Life Insurance Company
New York, NY 10010

Dear Mr. Wymans:

In May of this year, I will graduate from Prairie View A&M University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. I am interested in pursuing employment with an organization in which there would be opportunity for professional growth and advancement.

Enclosed is my resume which will give you an idea of my interest and achievements in the communications area. Please note that in selecting my curriculum, I emphasized creative writing and the development of oral communication skills.

Since I believe my background could be utilized very effectively by ABC Life, I hope to hear from you regarding a personal interview. My salary expectations are flexible and I am readily available to relocate.

Thank you for considering my qualifications.

Very truly yours,

Sandra Mason

Enclosure

Follow-Up Letter

P.O. Box 2124
Prairie View, TX 77446
February 19, 20xx

Ms. Darlene Bowman
Professional Recruitment Office
Houston Lighting & Power Company
P.O. Box 1700
Houston, TX 77001

Dear Ms. Bowman:

I wish to thank you for the opportunity to talk with you during your visit to Prairie View A&M University’s Career Center last week. I enjoyed our visit and the information you provided has strengthened my interest in the possibility of employment as an accountant with your firm.

The opportunities you described in revenue accounting with Houston Lighting & Power match my accounting and business computer science background and would give me the professional challenge I am looking for.

Again, I thank you and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Susan E. Taylor

Thank You - Interview

P.O. Box 2025
Prairie View, TX 77446
April 2, 20xx

Mr. Edward M. Johnson
Employment Relations Department
E.I. Du Pont de Nemours & Company, Inc.
Wilmington, DE 19896

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I enjoyed talking with you during the Career Festival about career opportunities with E.I. Du Pont de Nemours & Company and the summer employment positions that will be available.

Enclosed, you will find my application form and resume for your review. I would welcome the opportunity to arrange a personal interview at your convenience.

If additional application procedures are required, please advise me.

Your consideration of my application is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Smith

Enclosure(s)
Email Correspondence

For most of us, sending and receiving email is simple and fun. We use it to communicate with friends and family and to converse with our contemporaries in an informal manner. But while we may be unguarded in our tone when we email friends, a professional tone should be maintained when communicating with prospective employers.

Email is a powerful tool in the hands of a knowledgeable job-seeker. Use it wisely and you will shine. Use it improperly, however, and you’ll brand yourself as immature and unprofessional. It’s irritating when a professional email doesn’t stay on topic or the writer just rambles. Try to succinctly get your point across—then end the email.

Be aware that electronic mail is often the preferred method of communication between job-seeker and employer. There are general guidelines that should be followed when emailing cover letters, thank-you notes and replies to various requests for information. Apply the following advice to every email you write:

- Use a meaningful subject header for your email—one that is appropriate to the topic.
- Always be professional and businesslike in your correspondence. Address the recipient as Mr., Ms. or Mrs., and always verify the correct spelling of the recipient’s name.
- Be brief in your communications. Don’t overload the employer with lots of questions in your email.
- Ditch the emoticons. While a 😊 or an LOL (laughing out loud) may go over well with friends and family, do not use such symbols in your email communications with business people.
- Do not use strange fonts, wallpapers or multicolored backgrounds.
- Sign your email with your full name.
- Avoid using slang.
- Be sure to proofread and spell-check your email before sending it.

Neal Murray, former director of the career services center at the University of California, San Diego, sees a lot of email from job-seekers. “You’d be amazed at the number of emails I receive that have spelling errors, grammatical errors, formatting errors—emails that are too informal in tone or just poorly written,” says Murray. Such emails can send the wrong impression about you, especially to employers. It should accomplish three main things:

1. Introduce yourself to the employer. If you are a recent college graduate, mention your major and how it would apply to the job you are seeking. Discuss the organizations/extracurricular activities you were involved in and the part-time jobs you held while a student, even if they might seem trivial to you. Chances are, you probably picked up some transferable skills that you will be able to use in the work world.

2. Sell yourself. Briefly state your education and the skills that will benefit the employer. Don’t go into a lot of detail here—that’s what your resume is for—but give the employer a sense of your strengths and talents.

3. Request further action. This is where you request the next step, such as an appointment or a phone conversation. Be polite but sincere in your desire for further action.

Tips

In addition to the guidelines stated above, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Make sure you spell the recipient’s name correctly. If the person uses initials such as J.A. Smith and you are not certain of the individual’s gender, then begin the email: “Dear J.A. Smith.”
- Stick to a standard font like Times New Roman, 12-point.
- Keep your email brief and businesslike.
- Proofread everything you write before sending it.

While a well-crafted email may not be solely responsible for getting you your dream job, rest assured that an email full of errors will result in you being overlooked. Use these email guidelines and you will give yourself an advantage over other job-seekers who are unaware of how to professionally converse through email.

Written by John Martalo, a freelance writer based in San Diego.

Dear Ms. Jones:

I just wanted to send a quick note to thank you for yesterday’s interview. The position we discussed is exactly what I’ve been looking for, and I feel that I will be able to make a positive contribution to your organization. I appreciate the opportunity to be considered for employment at XYZ Corporation. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

Sincerely,

John Doe

Remember, a thank-you note is just that—a simple way to say thank you. In the business world, even these brief notes need to be handled with care.

Cover Letters

A well-crafted cover letter can help “sell” you to an employer. It should accomplish three main things:

1. Introduce yourself to the employer. If you are a recent college graduate, mention your major and how it would apply to the job you are seeking. Discuss the organizations/extracurricular activities you were involved in and the part-time jobs you held while a student, even if they might seem trivial to you. Chances are, you probably picked up some transferable skills that you will be able to use in the work world.

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3. Request further action. This is where you request the next step, such as an appointment or a phone conversation. Be polite but sincere in your desire for further action.

Thank-You Notes

If you’ve had an interview with a prospective employer, a thank-you note is a good way to express your appreciation. The note can be emailed a day or two after your interview and only needs to be a few sentences long, as in the following:

Dear Ms. Jones:

I just wanted to send a quick note to thank you for yesterday’s interview. The position we discussed is exactly what I’ve been looking for, and I feel that I will be able to make a positive contribution to your organization. I appreciate the opportunity to be considered for employment at XYZ Corporation. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

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Written by John Martalo, a freelance writer based in San Diego.
What Happens During the Interview?

The interviewing process can be scary if you don’t know what to expect. All interviews fit a general pattern. While each interview will differ, all will share three common characteristics: the beginning, middle and conclusion.

The typical interview will last 30 minutes, although some may be longer. A typical structure is as follows:

- Five minutes—small talk
- Fifteen minutes—a mutual discussion of your background and credentials as they relate to the needs of the employer
- Five minutes—asks you for questions
- Five minutes—conclusion of interview

As you can see, there is not a lot of time to state your case. The employer may try to do most of the talking. When you do respond to questions or ask your own, your statements should be concise and organized without being too brief.

It Starts Before You Even Say Hello

The typical interview starts before you even get into the inner sanctum. The recruiter begins to evaluate you the minute you are identified. You are expected to shake the recruiter’s hand upon being introduced. Don’t be afraid to extend your hand first. This shows assertiveness.

It’s a good idea to arrive at least 15 minutes early. You can use the time to relax. It gets easier later. It may mean counting to ten slowly or wiping your hands on a handkerchief to keep them dry.

How’s Your Small Talk Vocabulary?

Many recruiters will begin the interview with some small talk. Topics may range from the weather to sports and will rarely focus on anything that brings out your skills. Nevertheless, you are still being evaluated.

Recruiters are trained to evaluate candidates on many different points. They may be judging how well you communicate on an informal basis. This means you must do more than smile and nod.

The Recruiter Has the Floor

The main part of the interview starts when the recruiter begins discussing the organization. If the recruiter uses vague generalities about the position and you want more specific information, ask questions. Be sure you have a clear understanding of the job and the company.

As the interview turns to talk about your qualifications, be prepared to deal with aspects of your background that could be construed as negative, i.e., low grade point average, no participation in outside activities, no related work experience. It is up to you to convince the recruiter that although these points appear negative, positive attributes can be found in them. A low GPA could stem from having to fully support yourself through college; you might have no related work experience, but plenty of experience that shows you to be a loyal and valued employee.

Many times recruiters will ask why you chose the major you did or what your career goals are. These questions are designed to determine your goal direction. Employers seek people who have direction and motivation. This can be demonstrated by your answers to these innocent-sounding questions.

It’s Your Turn to Ask Questions

When the recruiter asks, “Now do you have any questions?” it’s important to have a few ready. Dr. C. Randall Powell, author of Career Planning Today, suggests some excellent strategies for dealing with this issue. He says questions should elicit positive responses from the employer. Also, the questions should bring out your interest in and knowledge of the organization.

By asking intelligent, well-thought-out questions, you show the employer you are serious about the organization and need more information. It also indicates to the recruiter that you have done your homework.

The Close Counts, Too

The interview isn’t over until you walk out the door. The conclusion of the interview usually lasts five minutes and is very important. During this time the recruiter is assessing your overall performance.

It is important to remain enthusiastic and courteous. Often the conclusion of the interview is indicated when the recruiter stands up. However, if you feel the interview has reached its conclusion, feel free to stand up first.

Shake the recruiter’s hand and thank him or her for considering you. Being forthright is a quality that most employers will respect, indicating that you feel you have presented your case and the decision is now up to the employer.

Expect the Unexpected

During the interview, you may be asked some unusual questions. Don’t be too surprised. Many times questions are asked simply to see how you react.

For example, surprise questions could range from, “Tell me a joke” to “What time period would you like to have lived in?” These are not the kind of questions for which you can prepare in advance. Your reaction time and the response you give will be evaluated by the employer, but there’s no way to anticipate questions like these. While these questions are not always used, they are intended to force you to react under some stress and pressure. The best advice is to think and give a natural response.

Evaluations Made by Recruiters

The employer will be observing and evaluating you during the interview. Erwin S. Stanton, author of Successful Personnel Recruiting and Selection, indicates some evaluations made by the employer during the interview include:

1. How mentally alert and responsive is the job candidate?
2. Is the applicant able to draw proper inferences and conclusions during the course of the interview?
3. Does the applicant demonstrate a degree of intellectual depth when communicating, or is his/her thinking shallow and lacking depth?
4. Has the candidate used good judgment and common sense regarding life planning up to this point?
5. What is applicant’s capacity for problem-solving activities?
6. How well does candidate respond to stress and pressure?
Ten Rules of Interviewing

Before stepping into an interview, be sure to practice, practice, practice. A job-seeker going to a job interview without preparing is like an actor performing on opening night without rehearsing.

To help with the interview process, keep the following ten rules in mind:

1. **Keep your answers brief and concise.**
   
   Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers to two to three minutes per question. Tape yourself and see how long it takes you to fully answer a question.

2. **Include concrete, quantifiable data.**
   
   Interviewees tend to talk in generalities. Unfortunately, generalities often fail to convince interviewers that the applicant has assets. Include measurable information and provide details about specific accomplishments when discussing your strengths.

3. **Repeat your key strengths three times.**
   
   It’s essential that you comfortably and confidently articulate your strengths. Explain how the strengths relate to the company’s or department’s goals and how they might benefit the potential employer. If you repeat your strengths then they will be remembered and—if supported with quantifiable accomplishments—they will more likely be believed.

4. **Prepare five or more success stories.**
   
   In preparing for interviews, make a list of your skills and key assets. Then reflect on past jobs and pick out one or two instances when you used those skills successfully.

5. **Put yourself on their team.**
   
   Ally yourself with the prospective employer by using the employer’s name and products or services. For example, “As a member of ________, I would carefully analyze the ________ and ________.” Show that you are thinking like a member of the team and will fit in with the existing environment. Be careful though not to say anything that would offend or be taken negatively. Your research will help you in this area.

6. **Image is often as important as content.**
   
   What you look like and how you say something are just as important as what you say. Studies have shown that 65 percent of the conveyed message is nonverbal; gestures, physical appearance and attire are highly influential during job interviews.

7. **Ask questions.**
   
   The types of questions you ask and the way you ask them can make a tremendous impression on the interviewer. Good questions require advance preparation. Just as you plan how you would answer an interviewer’s questions, write out specific questions you want to ask. Then look for opportunities to ask them during the interview.

8. **Maintain a conversational flow.**
   
   By consciously maintaining a conversational flow—a dialogue instead of a monologue—you will be perceived more positively. Use feedback questions at the end of your answers and use body language and voice intonation to create a conversational interchange between you and the interviewer.

9. **Research the company, product lines and competitors.**
   
   Research will provide information to help you decide whether you’re interested in the company and important data to refer to during the interview.

10. **Keep an interview journal.**
    
    As soon as possible, write a brief summary of what happened. Note any follow-up action you should take and put it in your calendar. Review your presentation. Keep a journal of your attitude and the way you answered the questions. Did you ask questions to get the information you needed? What might you do differently next time? Prepare and send a brief thank-you letter. Restate your skills and stress what you can do for the company.

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**In Summary**

Because of its importance, interviewing requires advance preparation. Only you will be able to positively affect the outcome. You must be able to compete successfully with the competition for the job you want. In order to do that, be certain you have considered the kind of job you want, why you want it and how you qualify for it. You also must face reality: *Is the job attainable?*

In addition, recognize what it is employers want in their candidates. They want “can do” and “will do” employees. Recognize and use the following factors to your benefit as you develop your sales presentation. In evaluating candidates, employers consider the following factors:

- Ability
- Character
- Loyalty
- Initiative
- Personality
- Communication skills
- Acceptance
- Work record
- Recommendations
- Outside activities while in school
- Impressions made during the interview

Written by Roseanne R. Bensley, Career Services, New Mexico State University.
Questions Asked by Employers

Personal
1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your hobbies?
3. Why did you choose to interview with our organization?
4. Describe your ideal job.
5. What can you offer us?
6. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
7. Can you name some weaknesses?
9. Have you ever had any failures? What did you learn from them?
10. Of which three accomplishments are you most proud?
11. Who are your role models? Why?
12. How does your college education or work experience relate to this job?
13. What motivates you most in a job?
14. Have you had difficulty getting along with a former professor/supervisor/co-worker and how did you handle it?
15. Have you ever spoken before a group of people? How large?
16. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
17. What do you know about our organization (products or services)?
18. Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?
19. Do you plan to return to school for further education?

Education
20. Why did you choose your major?
21. Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
22. Do you think you received a good education? In what ways?
23. In which campus activities did you participate?
24. Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?
25. Which elective classes did you like best? Least? Why?
26. If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?
27. Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?
28. Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?

Experience
29. What job-related skills have you developed?
30. Did you work while going to school? In what positions?
31. What did you learn from these work experiences?
32. What did you enjoy most about your last employment? Least?
33. Have you ever quit a job? Why?
34. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution to an employer.
35. Give an example of a time in which you worked under deadline pressure.
36. Have you ever done any volunteer work? What kind?
37. How do you think a former supervisor would describe your work?
38. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
39. What kind of boss do you prefer?
40. Would you be successful working with a team?
41. Do you prefer large or small organizations? Why?
42. What other types of positions are you considering?
43. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
44. Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
45. How do you feel about working overtime?
46. How do you feel about travel?
47. How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
48. Are you willing to work flextime?

Career Goals
49. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
50. What kind of boss do you prefer?
51. Would you be successful working with a team?
52. Do you prefer large or small organizations? Why?
53. What other types of positions are you considering?
54. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
55. Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
56. How do you feel about working overtime?
57. How do you feel about travel?
58. How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
59. Are you willing to work flextime?

Questions to Ask Employers
1. Please describe the duties of the job for me.
2. What kinds of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
3. Are salary adjustments geared to the cost of living or job performance?
4. Does your company encourage further education?
5. How often are performance reviews given?
6. What products (or services) are in the development stage now?
7. Do you have plans for expansion?
8. What are your growth projections for next year?
9. Have you cut your staff in the last three years?
10. How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
11. Do you offer flextime?
12. Is your company environmentally conscious? In what ways?
13. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
14. Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
15. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?
16. May I talk with the last person who held this position?
17. What is the usual promotional time frame?
18. Does your company offer either single or dual career track programs?
19. What do you like best about your job/company?
20. Once the probation period is completed, how much authority will I have over decisions?
21. Has there been much turnover in this job area?
22. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
23. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
24. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
25. What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
26. Is there a lot of team/project work?
27. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
28. Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
29. How much travel, if any, is involved in this position?
30. What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?
Turning the Tables in the Interview

You’ve sat through most of the interview and have answered all the recruiter’s questions. You know you’ve made a good impression because you prepared for the interview and your answers were articulate and decisive. You’ve come across as a very bright, capable candidate when the recruiter asks something you didn’t anticipate: “Do you have any questions?”

If you don’t have any questions prepared and you try to cover your mistake by asking a spur-of-the-moment question, chances are you will damage your chances for a successful interview. Some recruiters refuse to hire people who don’t ask intelligent questions. Don’t ask questions just for the sake of asking questions—make sure it is information that you need.

Prepare Questions in Advance

You should have a list of questions prepared for this crucial part of the interview. Every question you ask should demonstrate your interest and confirm your knowledge of the organization.

You should read publications in the field. You can get information about new products or policies by surfing the employer’s Web site or by reading general magazines or trade publications. It is appropriate to address some of your questions to what you have read. Ask about new products, how research and development is structured at the company, management strategies at the company, how the company has changed, and potential product growth.

Some of the publications providing a wealth of information are Fortune, Forbes, BusinessWeek and The Wall Street Journal.

Questions Not to Ask

Not only should you know what questions to ask during the interview, but it is important to know what questions not to ask. You don’t want to alienate the recruiter by putting him or her on the defensive.

The following areas should generally be avoided:

1. Avoid asking questions that are answered in the company’s annual report or employment brochure. Recruiters are familiar enough with their own information to recognize when you haven’t done your homework. If some information in the annual report isn’t clear to you, by all means ask for clarification.

2. Don’t bring up salary or benefits in the initial interview. The majority of companies recruiting are very competitive and will offer approximately similar salaries and benefits. The recruiter may choose to bring up the information, but you should not initiate the topic.

3. Avoid asking any personal questions or questions that will put the recruiter on the defensive. This includes questions such as the interviewer’s educational background, marital status, past work experience and so on.

4. Don’t ask questions that have already been answered during the interview. If you have prepared a list of questions and some of them have been addressed during the interview, do not repeat them unless you need clarification.

Questions You Should Ask

Now that you know what you shouldn’t ask during the interview, determine what questions you should ask.

1. Ask specific questions about the position. You need to know what duties will be required of the person in the position to see if there is a fit between your interests and qualifications and the job you seek.

2. Try to find out as much as possible about qualities and skills the recruiter is looking for in job candidates. Once you determine the necessary qualities, you can then explain to the recruiter how your background and capabilities relate to those qualities.

3. Ask questions concerning advancement and promotion paths available. Every company is different and most advancement policies are unique. Try to find out what the possible promotion path is to see if it fits your career goals. You may also want to ask about periodic performance evaluations.

4. It is appropriate to ask specific questions about the company’s training program if this information is not covered in company literature.

5. Ask questions about location and travel required. If you have limitations, this is the time to find out what is expected in the position.

Some Final Advice

The key to a successful interview is good communication and rapport with the recruiter. One of the fastest ways to damage this kind of relationship is by exhibiting ignorance about the company and asking inappropriate questions.

Listed below are questions you might ask during the interview. (Used with permission from Career Planning Today, C. Randall Powell.)

- How much travel is normally expected?
- Can I progress at my own pace or is it structured?
- How much contact and exposure to management is there?
- Is it possible to move through the training program faster?
- About how many individuals go through your training program each year?
- How much freedom is given and discipline required of new people?
- How often are performance reviews given?
- How much decision-making authority is given after one year?
- How much input does the new person have on geographical location?
- What is the average age of top management?
- What is the average time it takes to get to ___________ level in the career path?
Evaluating an Offer of Employment

Congratulations! You’ve successfully managed your second interviews and have been offered a job! Perhaps you’ve even received offers from more than one employer. Whether it’s one offer or more, your euphoria is sometimes quickly replaced by anxiety about the decisions which lie ahead. You may be wondering, “Is this the ‘right’ job for me?” or “Am I going to be happy in this job, or should I just take it because I need a job, period?” Careful evaluation of your job offer and some serious thought as to how well the position and organization meet your needs can enable you to make the best choice for yourself. One of our staff members can help you sort out your options.

In evaluating your job offer, there are three critical questions you should address:

1. **How closely does the offer match your career goal?**
   Think back to when you started your job search. What was important to you? What factors regarding a job, organization and work environment were on your “wish list”? Have they changed? How well does this position fit these factors? Below are some factors you may want to consider in evaluating your offer. Some of these may not be important to you, and there may be other factors not listed which are extremely important to your decision.

2. **Do you need additional information about the offer (or anything) in order to make a decision?** It is not unusual to discover, as you’re weighing different factors about the offer, that you have additional questions, lack some factual data, or simply need a better sense of what the job and organization are like. If this is the case, STOP! Don’t go any further in your deliberations until you address these issues. You may need to call one of your interviewers and ask additional questions, or contact an alum who works for the organization. If you need a better understanding of what it would be like during a day on the job, call the employer (if they are local) and ask to spend an afternoon observing an entry-level employee in the job you’re considering. Most employers will be willing to accommodate you. If you have other questions or concerns which impact your decision, you should discuss them with a representative from our office.

3. **Are there issues you may want to negotiate, which would bring the offer closer to your goal?** Perhaps the issues which concern you about the offer can be changed. If the job seems ideal except for location, then you might want to raise the issue with the employer. Some start dates are non-negotiable because training classes must begin together. In some instances, however, the start date can be adjusted.

**Factors for Consideration**

- Nature of the work
- Organizational culture
- Level of autonomy
- Travel
- Salary
- Mentoring
- Lifestyles of employees
- Stability of organization
- Quality of higher management
- Support for continuing education/advanced degree
- Level of responsibility
- Location
- Work hours
- Benefits
- Variety of work
- Stability of industry
- Advancement opportunities
- Training and development opportunities
- Opportunities to learn and grow in job/company
- Transferability of skills/experience from job
- Prestige of job or organization

Written by Virginia Lacy. Adapted with permission from Northwestern University’s Career Services Guide; © 1998 Virginia Lacy.
Clark County School District, the fifth largest school district in the nation, is currently accepting applications for the following positions:

- Art Teachers, Grades K-5
- Bilingual (Spanish) Teachers, Grades K-5
- Elementary Teachers, Grades K-5
- English Teachers, Grades 7-12
- Foreign Languages, Grades 7-12 (Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Spanish)
- Mathematics and Science Teachers, Grades 7-12*
- Music Teachers, Grades K-5
- Music Teachers, Grades 7-12 (Band, Strings, Choir, Mariachi)
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- School Nurses
- School Psychologists
- School Social Worker
- Social Studies Teachers, Grades 7-12
- Special Education Teachers, Grades K-12*
- Speech-Language Pathologists
- Teachers of the Deaf, Grades K-12
- Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Grades K-12

* Special Qualifications License (SQL)

Teaching opportunities available for individuals who meet requirements including:

- Bachelor's degree(s) in mathematics, science, or related fields
- Five years of successful employment history in mathematics or science related fields

Apply online at: [http://www.ccsd.net/jobs](http://www.ccsd.net/jobs)

For more information call the Human Resources Division:

702.855.5414
The Art of Negotiating

A n area of the job search that often receives little attention is the art of negotiating. Once you have been offered a job, you have the opportunity to discuss with the employer the terms of your employment. Negotiations may be uncomfortable or unsatisfying because we tend to approach them with a winner-take-all attitude that is counterproductive to the concept of negotiations.

Negotiating with your potential employer can make your job one that best meets your own needs as well as those of your employer. To ensure successful negotiations, it is important to understand the basic components. The definition of negotiation as it relates to employment is: a series of communications (either oral or in writing) that reach a satisfying conclusion for all concerned parties, most often between the new employee and the hiring organization.

Negotiation is a planned series of events that requires strategy, presentation and patience. Preparation is probably the single most important part of successful negotiations. Any good trial attorney will tell you the key to presenting a good case in the courtroom is the hours of preparation that happen beforehand. The same is true for negotiating. A good case will literally present itself. What follows are some suggestions that will help you prepare for successful negotiating.

Research

Gather as much factual information as you can to back up the case you want to make. For example, if most entering employees cannot negotiate salary, you may be jeopardizing the offer by focusing on that aspect of the package. Turn your attention to other parts of the offer such as their health plan, dental plan, retirement package, the type of schedule you prefer, etc.

Psychological Preparation

Chances are that you will not know the person with whom you will be negotiating. If you are lucky enough to be acquainted, spend some time reviewing what you know about this person’s communication style and decision-making behavior.

In most cases, however, this person will be a stranger. Since most people find the unknown a bit scary, you’ll want to ask yourself what approach to negotiating you find most comfortable. How will you psyche yourself up to feel confident enough to ask for what you want? How will you respond to counteroffers? What are your alternatives? What’s your bottom line? In short, plan your strategy.

Be sure you know exactly what you want. This does not mean you will get exactly that, but having the information clear in your head will help you determine what you are willing to concede. Unless you know what you want, you won’t be able to tell somebody else. Clarity improves communication, which is the conduit for effective negotiations.

Practice

Rehearse the presentation in advance using another person as the employer. If you make mistakes in rehearsal, chances are that you will not repeat them during the actual negotiations. A friend can critique your reasoning and help you prepare for questions. If this all seems like a lot of work, remember that if something is worth negotiating for, it is worth preparing for.

Dollars and Sense

Always begin by expressing genuine interest in the position and the organization, emphasizing the areas of agreement but allowing “wiggle room” to compromise on other areas. Be prepared to support your points of disagreement, outlining the parts you would like to alter, your suggestions on how this can be done and why it would serve the company’s best interests to accommodate your request.

Be prepared to defend your proposal. Back up your reasons for wanting to change the offer with meaningful, work-related skills and positive benefits to the employer. Requesting a salary increase because you are a fast learner or have a high GPA are usually not justifiable reasons in the eyes of the employer. Meaningful work experience or internships that have demonstrated or tested your professional skills are things that will make an employer stop and take notice.

It is sometimes more comfortable for job-seekers to make this initial request in writing and plan to meet later to hash out the differences. You will need to be fairly direct and assertive at this point even though you may feel extremely vulnerable. Keep in mind that the employer has chosen you from a pool of qualified applicants, so you are not as powerless as you think.

Sometimes the employer will bristle at the suggestion that there is room to negotiate. Stand firm, but encourage the employer to think about it for a day or two at which time you will discuss the details of your proposal with him/her. Do not rush the process because you are uncomfortable. The employer may be counting on this discomfort and use it to derail the negotiations. Remember, this is a series of volleys and lobs, trade-offs and compromises that occur over a period of time. It is a process—not a singular event!

Once you have reached a conclusion with which you are both relatively comfortable, present in writing your interpretation of the agreement so that if there is any question, it will be addressed immediately. Negotiation, by definition, implies that each side will give. Do not perceive it as an ultimatum.

If the employer chooses not to grant any of your requests—and realistically, he or she can do that—you will still have the option of accepting the original offer provided you have maintained a positive, productive and friendly atmosphere during your exchanges. You can always re-enter negotiations after you have demonstrated your worth to the organization.

Money Isn’t Everything

There are many things you can negotiate besides salary. For example, benefits can add thousands of dollars to the compensation package. Benefits can range from paid personal leave to discounts on the company’s products and services. They constitute more than just icing on the cake; they may be better than the cake itself. Traditional benefits packages include health insurance, paid vacation and personal/sick days. Companies may offer such benefits as child care, elder care or use of the company jet for family emergencies. Other lucrative benefits could include disability and life insurance and a variety of retirement plans. Some organizations offer investment and stock options as well as relocation reimbursement and tuition credits for continued education.

Written by Lily Maestas, Counseling and Career Services, University of California, Santa Barbara.
The Benefits of Company Benefits

Though promises of high starting salaries or accelerated career growth may entice you as you search for your dream job, don’t forget to check out the company’s benefits package. These packages are generally designed to provide protection against financial hardship brought about by unforeseen circumstances, such as illness or injury. With the high cost of medical services, even a routine physical exam can set you back several hundred dollars if you don’t have coverage. “Most employees today are looking for more than a paycheck,” says Amy Roppe, a senior account manager at Benefit Source, Inc., a Des Moines, Iowa-based company that designs and administers employee benefit packages. “Employees are looking for overall job satisfaction, and benefits are a key part of that.”

What kinds of benefits can you expect at your first job out of college? That depends. Not all benefits programs are created equal, and most have certain rules, limitations and exclusions, particularly in regard to health plans. Though some employers still provide complete coverage with no out-of-pocket expense to workers, most company plans now require the employee to pay part of the benefits expense, often in the form of payroll deductions. However, the cost is usually reasonable in comparison to footing the entire bill by yourself. The benefits described below will give you a general overview of what many companies offer to their employees:

- **Medical insurance.** This is the most basic (and probably most important) benefit you can receive. Health coverage limits an employee’s financial liability in the event of illness or injury.

- **Disability insurance.** Provides an income to the employee in the event of a long-term disability.

- **Life insurance.** Provides a benefit payment to family members in the event of the employee’s death.

- **Dental insurance.** Provides basic dental coverage. Though many people agree that dental insurance is overpriced (you’ll seldom get more than your premiums back in the form of benefits), you’ll be covered for cleanings, scalings and x-rays.

- **Prescription drug plan.** This can save you a bundle, particularly if you require medicine for an ongoing condition. Typically, the employee pays a fixed co-payment—for example, $25—for each prescription.

- **Vision.** Provides a benefit that helps defray the cost of eye exams and corrective lenses.

- **Retirement plans.** These used to be funded entirely by employers but have been largely replaced by 401(k) plans, which are funded by the employee, often with some degree of “matching” contribution from the employer. However, these matching contributions have limits and the plans vary from company to company. In many companies, there is a specified waiting period before new employees can participate.

- **Flexible spending accounts.** These plans allow you to set aside untaxed dollars to pay for dependent care and unreimbursed medical expenses.

- **Tuition reimbursement.** The employer reimburses the cost of continuing education as long as the classes pertain to your job and certain grade levels are achieved.

- **Vacation.** Most companies will offer paid vacation time to employees. The number of days off is usually determined by how long you’ve been with the company.

- **Sick time.** Paid leave in the event of illness.

You should also be aware that there is something called “soft benefits.” These are usually very popular with employees and cost the company little or nothing. For example, many companies have gone to a business casual dress code, while others may offer what is called “dress-down Fridays.” Flextime is another popular soft benefit that many employers offer. This simply means that you don’t have to arrive at work at a specific time each day. If it’s more convenient for you to start at 10 a.m. to avoid the morning rush hour, for example, you’ll be able to do so. However, most companies require employees to be at the office during predetermined “core hours”—usually between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Telecommuting from home is another “benefit” that employers like to tout. However, don’t assume you’ll be allowed to work from home whenever you want. You’ll usually be offered this option when you’re too sick to make it to the office, when you’re on a tight deadline and your boss wants you to put in extra time, or when you’re unable to come to work because of weather-related conditions.

And just what are the most popular benefits among recent college grads entering the work force? “In today’s environment, it is assumed that health insurance will be offered,” says Amy Roppe, “so most young employees tend to inquire more about retirement or bonus programs. No one is sure whether or not there will be a Social Security benefit when retirement time comes. Workers are taking more personal responsibility for their own financial futures.” That sounds like the kind of common-sense advice we should all take.

Written by John Martalo, a freelance writer based in San Diego.
Professional Etiquette

Your academic knowledge and skills may be spectacular, but do you have the social skills needed to be successful in the workplace? Good professional etiquette indicates to potential employers that you are a mature, responsible adult who can aptly represent your company. Not knowing proper etiquette could damage your image, prevent you from getting a job and jeopardize personal and business relationships.

Meeting and Greeting

Etiquette begins with meeting and greeting. Terry Cobb, human resource director at Wachovia Corporation in South Carolina’s Palmetto region, emphasizes the importance of making a good first impression—beginning with the handshake. A firm shake, he says, indicates to employers that you’re confident and assertive. A limp handshake, on the other hand, sends the message that you’re not interested or qualified for the job. Dave Owenby, human resources manager for North and South Carolina at Sherwin Williams, believes, “Good social skills include having a firm handshake, smiling, making eye contact and closing the meeting with a handshake.”

The following basic rules will help you get ahead in the workplace:

- Always rise when introducing or being introduced to someone.
- Provide information in making introductions—you are responsible for keeping the conversation going. “Joe, please meet Ms. Crawford, CEO at American Enterprise, Inc., in Cleveland.” “Mr. Jones, this is Kate Smith, a senior majoring in computer information systems at Northwestern University.”
- Unless given permission, always address someone by his or her title and last name.
- Practice a firm handshake. Make eye contact while shaking hands.

Dining

Shirley Willey, owner of Etiquette & Company, reports that roughly 80% of second interviews involve a business meal. Cobb remembers one candidate who had passed his initial interview with flying colors. Because the second interview was scheduled close to noon, Cobb decided to conduct the interview over lunch. Initially, the candidate was still in the “interview” mode and maintained his professionalism. After a while, however, he became more relaxed—and that’s when the candidate’s real personality began to show. He had terrible table manners, made several off-color remarks and spoke negatively about previous employers. Needless to say, Cobb was unimpressed, and the candidate did not get the job.

Remember that an interview is always an interview, regardless of how relaxed or informal the setting. Anything that is said or done will be considered by the interviewer, cautions Cobb.

In order to make a good impression during a lunch or dinner interview, make sure you:

- Arrive on time.
- Wait to sit until the host/hostess indicates the seating arrangement.
- Practice a firm handshake. Make eye contact while shaking hands.
- Place napkin in lap before eating or drinking anything.
- When ordering, keep in mind that this is a talking business lunch. Order something easy to eat, such as boneless chicken or fish.
- Do not hold the order up because you cannot make a decision. Feel free to ask for suggestions from others at the table.
- Wait to eat until everyone has been served.
- Keep hands in lap unless you are using them to eat.
- Practice proper posture; sit up straight with your arms close to your body.
- Bring food to your mouth—not your head to the plate.
- Try to eat at the same pace as everyone else.
- Take responsibility for keeping up the conversation.
- Place napkin on chair seat if excusing yourself for any reason.
- Place napkin beside plate at the end of the meal.
- Push chair under table when excusing yourself.

Eating

Follow these simple rules for eating and drinking:

- Start eating with the implement that is farthest away from your plate. You may have two spoons and two forks. The spoon farthest away from your plate is a soup spoon. The fork farthest away is a salad fork unless you have three forks, one being much smaller, which would be a seafood fork for an appetizer. The dessert fork/spoon is usually above the plate.
- Remember to work from the outside in.
- Dip soup away from you; sip from the side of the spoon.
- Season food only after you have tasted it.
- Place salt and pepper together—even if asked for only one.
- Pass all items to the right. If the item has a handle, pass it with the handle toward the next person. For bowls with spoons, pass with the spoon ready for the next person. If you are the one to reach to the center of the table for an item, pass it before serving yourself.
- While you are speaking during a meal, utensils should be resting on plate (fork and knife crossed on the plate with tines down).
- Don’t chew with your mouth open or blow on your food.

The interviewer will usually take care of the bill and the tip. Be prepared, however, if this doesn’t happen and have small bills ready to take care of your part, including the tip. Never make an issue of the check.

Social skills can make or break your career. Employees have to exhibit a certain level of professionalism and etiquette in their regular work day, and particularly in positions where the come in contact with clients. Be one step ahead—practice the social skills necessary to help you make a great first impression and stand out in a competitive job market.

Written by Jennie Hunter, a professor at Western Carolina University.
I am advancing U.S. interests abroad.

Growing up in Valdosta, Georgia, my mother and grandfather, who both served in the military, encouraged the idea of public service; it was always a part of my life. I had dreams of becoming a cardiologist but didn’t fare well majoring in biology. I decided to take an international relations class which is where I first learned about the U.S. Department of State. This inspired me to apply for an internship and I spent a summer working in the embassy in Fiji. After this experience, I decided to pursue a career as a Foreign Service Officer.

I entered the Foreign Service through the Pickering Fellowship program. Now, after seven months of intensive Spanish language training, I’m ready to work as a Consular Officer in Central America. I’m ready to contribute my skills, and learn new ones, as I represent my country overseas.

For anyone who wants an amazing public service career, where you get to explain U.S. foreign policy and experience other cultures, the Foreign Service is it.

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